

ROLE OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR
IN STUDENT REGISTRATION

by 1264

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The role of the counselor in the secondary school has been the subject for many papers. Much of this writing appears to be on an ideal level and does not deal directly with many of the problems faced by secondary counselors. A study by Stewart summarized some of these problems.¹ The majority of these complaints causing the gap between theory and practice were clerical and administrative in nature. Counselors, for example, were responsible for determining and meting out discipline, handling absentees and truancy, recording test grades and scores on school records, and serving as a substitute teacher and general errand runner.

Other duties faced by secondary counselors are discussed only sparingly or not at all in the literature. One duty not discussed is that of secondary counselors being responsible for student registration. In discussions with Kansas secondary counselors, it was apparent that counselors do have, in varying degrees, responsibility for this task. But it was equally apparent that there was no consensus of opinion on the question of counselors doing student registration.

The scarcity of articles on the question of student scheduling and registration and the counselor's role therein, combined with an apparent lack of consensus of opinion among counselors, raised numerous questions. The first question would be one of semantics. It was probable and likely that each counselor would have a different definition for the words scheduling and registration. Each counselor's definition would likely

¹ C. C. Stewart, "A Bill of Rights for School Counselors", Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 37 No. 7:500-503, March, 1959.

be related to his particular school situation. The first task would be to clarify the meaning of these two words.

A second item would be to attempt to determine the counselor's role in these areas. Namely, are counselors doing registration and if the answer is yes, to what extent are they involved? If counselors are doing registration, are they encroaching on an administrative and/or clerical task that correspondingly reduces their time for counseling? And if counselors are doing registration, do they feel that this is their duty?

Statement of Problem. The purpose of this investigation was to determine the role of the secondary counselor in student scheduling and registration. Specifically the objectives of this investigation were:

1. To determine if counselors help students plan their school programs and if counselors feel this is their duty.
2. To determine if counselors register their students in these programs and if counselors feel this is their duty.
3. To determine how much time counselors estimate they spend in planning student programs and/or student registration.
4. To determine if counselors prepare the master schedule and if counselors feel this is their duty.

Research Design. This investigation was a combination library report and research project. The library at Kansas State University was used for supplementary information. A questionnaire was constructed and mailed to selected school counselors in schools with an enrollment of 500 or more in northeast and north-central Kansas. Enrollments were based on the 1968-1969 edition of the Kansas School Directory. There was no attempt to determine if each counselor was fully qualified according to the policies of the State Department of Education. There was also no attempt to

determine if each counselor was working full-time or part-time.

The locations of the schools surveyed were a matter of geography and population. The major population centers and largest schools are generally found in northeast and north-central Kansas. The one notable exception is the Wichita area which was not included.

All schools with an enrollment of a thousand or more in the described area were contacted. There were numerous schools with enrollments between five hundred and six hundred. About one-half of these schools in the described area were contacted. The schools were selected at random. All schools with enrollments of seven hundred to a thousand were contacted.

The figure of five hundred enrollment as a dividing point was selected for several reasons. First, it would be expected that schools with an enrollment of five hundred or more would have a more varied curriculum. This in turn implies that students would have more of a choice of classes and in larger schools a choice between academic or general-vocational programs of study. This would then imply that more counseling would be needed to help the student select those classes or programs that best fit his needs.

A second reason was that with larger enrollments and more classes and programs available, more time could be expected to be spent in scheduling and registration.

The schools in the sample were divided into three categories: group A schools with an enrollment of 500-999, group B schools with an enrollment of 1000-1499, and group C schools with an enrollment of 1500 and over. The reason for this breakdown was to see if there were differences between the groups in the counselor's definition of his role in theory and practice in scheduling and registration.